

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A system, device, and method for managing alternate site switching in  
5 an optical communication system recovers from failures/degradations that  
are uncorrected by the core optical communication network. When an  
uncorrected failure/degradation is detected, communications for a protected  
end-system are switched from a primary end-system to a backup end-system.  
The backup end-system may be selected *a priori*, for example, during  
10 connection establishment, in order to reduce switching time once a decision  
has been made to switch communications from the primary end-system to the  
backup end-system. Provisions are made for completing the alternate site  
switching within a specified amount of time. Load balancing may be used to  
further reduce switching time from the primary end-system to the backup  
15 end-system. This alternate site switching augments the various protection  
mechanisms provided by the core optical communication network in order to  
provide end-to-end protection for the optical communication path.